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COOPER HEWITT, SMITHSONIAN DESIGN MUSEUM TO SHOWCASE WORLD-RENOWNED COLLECTION AND SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS IN INAUGURAL INSTALLATION THROUGHOUT THE TRANSFORMED CARNEGIE MANSION

DEC. 9, 2014

Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum will open on Friday, Dec. 12 with an inaugural display of more than 700 objects in 10 exhibitions and installations across four floors of the transformed Carnegie Mansion. The renovated museum will highlight its rich and diverse collection of historical and contemporary design objects as never before, with a five-fold increase in the square footage devoted to showcasing the permanent collection and 60 percent more space for special exhibitions.

Cooper Hewitt's inaugural exhibitions explore virtually every aspect of design, invite visitors to participate in the design process, and feature an astounding range of objects – from the humble and ubiquitous (eight different patented models of the wooden clothespin) to complex forms and vivid colors (as rendered in Michael Eden's 3D-printed urn). The visitor experience is further enhanced through interactive elements, allowing visitors to explore the collection digitally on ultra-high-definition touch-screen tables, draw their own designs in the Immersion Room, and solve real world design problems in the Process Lab.

"This dazzling array of objects, ideas and experiences goes far beyond anything that Cooper Hewitt was able to present before," said Caroline Baumann, Director of Cooper Hewitt. "Thanks to the transformation of the Carnegie Mansion, we can display treasures from our vast collection in contexts that range from the thematic and chronological to the quirky and poetic—and at the same time, draw on loans from private sources and ten other Smithsonian museums and research centers to offer a panorama of design, from the historic to the contemporary. With these inaugural exhibitions, we are truly showing our visitors what it means for us to be the nation's design museum."

ON VIEW IN THE NEW COOPER HEWITT

"**Tools: Extending Our Reach**" (on view Dec. 12, 2014 through May 25, 2015) debuts in the versatile new 6,000-square-foot Barbara and Morton Mandel Design Gallery on the third floor of the museum. "Tools" presents approximately 175 objects spanning 1.85 million years – from a Paleolithic hand chopper made from volcanic rock to a live feed of the sun transmitted by an orbiting satellite – all drawn from the collections of the Cooper Hewitt and ten Smithsonian museums and research centers. Curated by Cara McCarty, Curatorial Director, and Matilda McQuaid, Deputy Curatorial Director, the exhibition explores how tools extend the human body, senses, capacity and action to change the world and ourselves. Other exhibition highlights include central African throwing knives, a Swiss Army knife, Eskimo



snow goggles carved from mammoth-fossil ivory, an artificial heart, a 3D printer that can operate in zero gravity, and a tiny remote-controlled “robobee.”

“**Beautiful Users**” (on view Dec. 12, 2014 through April 26, 2015) premieres in the new Design Process Galleries on the first floor, introducing visitors to the shift toward user-centric design based on observations of human anatomy and behavior. Featuring 120 objects, the exhibition begins with insights of the mid-20th century industrial designer Henry Dreyfuss at Bell Labs and shows how definitions of the “normal” person have become more inclusive, how designers have come to think of their subjects as users rather than consumers, and how these users are now acting as designers themselves through phenomena such as 3D printing and “Ikea hacking.” Curated by Ellen Lupton, Senior Curator of Contemporary Design, “Beautiful Users” is dedicated to the memory of Bill Moggridge, a pioneer of human-centered design who designed the first laptop computer (the Grid Compass, included in the exhibition) and who was director of Cooper Hewitt from 2010 to 2012.

Also on the first floor, in the new Marks Gallery in the former Music Room, the museum’s popular series of guest-curated “Selects” exhibitions continues with “**Maira Kalman Selects**” (on view Dec. 12, 2014 through June 14, 2015). Author, artist and designer Maira Kalman chose 40 objects from Cooper Hewitt, other Smithsonian collections, and her own home, with her selections guided by “a gasp of delight.” Organized by Kalman and Caitlin Condell, Curatorial Assistant of Drawings, Prints and Graphic Design, the exhibition features whimsical, melancholy, and idiosyncratic objects that suggest a life story from birth through death, including stockings, shoes, hats, teapots, illustrated books (including vintage editions of *Alice in Wonderland* and *Winnie the Pooh*), the Gerrit Rietfeld Zig Zag Chair (ca. 1934), a Queen Victoria memorial handkerchief, and Abraham Lincoln’s funeral pall and gold pocket watch.

The second floor features four exhibitions highlighting aspects of Cooper Hewitt’s renowned collection, including “**Making Design**” (on view Dec. 12, 2014 through 2015), which brings together more than 350 objects for the museum’s first long-term survey of works from its collection. Installed in a suite of renovated galleries on the second floor, “Making Design” features furniture, lighting fixtures, tableware, clothing, jewelry, books, and posters that provide an overview of five key elements of design: color (red, for this initial installation), form, line, pattern and texture. A provocative visual feast of extraordinary objects, juxtapositions include the red of Jonathan Ive’s design for the iPod Nano compared with the red of the Campana Brothers’s *Vermelha* chair upholstered in cotton rope, the undulating form of an Alvar Aalto glass vase compared with Tinker Hatfield’s contoured sole for the Nike Air Jordan sneaker, and the water pattern of a late 19th-century Japanese fabric compared with the wavy pattern of Bob Dylan’s hair in a 1966 poster by Milton Glaser.

Also on the second floor, in galleries that were formerly the Carnegies’ bedrooms, “**Hewitt Sisters Collect**” (on view Dec. 12, 2014 through 2015) is the first exhibition to share the story of Eleanor and Sarah Hewitt. In 1897, the sisters established a museum within Cooper Union that was modeled on the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris and the V&A in London, conceived as “a practical working laboratory” where students and designers could be

inspired by actual objects. The Hewitts' contributions and collecting philosophy are celebrated with objects they gave to the museum or that were acquired under their auspices. Curated by Gail Davidson, Curator and Head of Drawings, Prints, and Graphic Design, the exhibition features 108 objects, including antique Greek vessels from the fifth and sixth centuries B.C., French and Italian master drawings and prints of architectural elements and scenes, Meissen porcelain and Wedgwood stoneware, 18th- and 19th-century architectural birdcages, tapestry and embroidery fragments, and a selection of block-printed wallpapers spanning some 150 years.

One of the Cooper Hewitt's great treasures is the former Carnegie Family Library on the second floor, which features intricately ornamental teak woodwork created by Lockwood de Forest, the leading American exponent of the Aesthetic Movement. The only extant interior by de Forest still situated in the building for which it was created, the Teak Room hosts the special exhibition "**Passion for the Exotic: Lockwood de Forest, Frederic Church**" (on view Dec. 12, 2014 through September 2015). Curated by Sarah Coffin, Curator and Head of Product Design and Decorative Arts, and Gail Davidson, Curator and Head of Drawings, Prints, and Graphic Design, the exhibition pays homage both to de Forest and to his mentor, the Hudson River School painter Frederic Church, and evokes the fascination of late 19th-century America with the arts of India. "Passion for the Exotic" will include two dozen objects, including drawings, books, stencils, furniture and carved panels by de Forest, works on paper by Church (including a view of his home, Olana), and objects from the 16th through 19th centuries—such as tilework, a wall hanging, and a silver-inlaid ewer—that originated from the vast region that Church, de Forest and Carnegie would have called "the East."

The **Models & Prototypes** gallery, also on the second floor, features rotating installations of examples from the collection to provide insights into the design process. The inaugural display (on view Dec. 12, 2014 through 2015), curated by Sarah Coffin, Curator and Head of Product Design and Decorative Arts, focuses on exceptional staircase models by aspiring and established craftsmen, donated to Cooper Hewitt by Eugene V. and Clare E. Thaw. The 16 models (and four accompanying drawings), ranging in height from 6 inches to 4 feet and dating from the late 18th to the early 20th century, display the structure and design for staircases in pulpits, bell towers, church domes, department stores and private homes, as well as document the European tradition of design instruction.

The museum itself is a grand design object, as shown in the ground-floor exhibition "**Designing the New Cooper Hewitt.**" Design briefs, sketches, photographs, blueprints and other illustrations from the team of designers reveal the process behind nearly three years of renovation and transformation at the museum.

The visitor experience is further enhanced through new interactive installations that encourage deeper exploration of the museum's collection. The new **Immersion Room**, on the second floor, features Cooper Hewitt's extraordinary collection of wallcoverings. Visitors can select their favorite designs from 200 images from the wallcoverings collection dating from ca. 1780 to 2013, including work by artists (Andy Warhol, Niki de St. Phalle and Urs Fischer), architects and designers (Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier and Irma Boom), and manufacturers (William Morris, Cole & Son, Ltd. and Sears)—or draw their own—and then

project full-scale versions onto the surrounding walls, discovering the collection as never before. In the dynamic and interactive Process Lab, on the first floor, visitors can brainstorm design solutions through hands-on and digital activities. The lab emphasizes how design is a way of thinking, planning and problem solving, and provides a foundation for the rest of the design concepts on view in the museum.

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

“Tools” and “Beautiful Users” will be accompanied by fully illustrated catalogs. Other reopening publications include *Making Design: Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum Collection*, designed by Irma Boom; *Life of a Mansion: The Story of Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum*; and two books by Maira Kalman, *Ah-ha to Zig-Zag: 31 Objects from Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum* and *My Favorite Things*.

Tools: Extending Our Reach (published by Cooper Hewitt) features more than 200 images and authoritative essays celebrating human ingenuity across cultures and over time.

Beautiful Users: Designing for People (co-published by Cooper Hewitt and Princeton Architectural Press), by Ellen Lupton, explores the changing relationship between designers and users and considers a range of design methodologies and practices, from user research to hacking, open source and the maker culture.

Making Design (published by Cooper Hewitt), the first Cooper Hewitt collection handbook to be produced since 1997, is designed by Irma Boom as a roadmap to explore the museum’s collection. Intended as a design object itself, the glow-in-the-dark publication will be a lasting resource for museum visitors and the public as well as for design students, researchers, scholars and professional designers. It provides an in-depth understanding of design processes and the museum’s extraordinary holdings relative to design ideas today.

Life of a Mansion: The Story of Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum (published by Cooper Hewitt) by Heather Ewing is the history of the Carnegie Mansion and of Cooper Hewitt. Illustrated with 200 photographs, maps, floor plans and letters, the book chronicles the 110-year history of the National Landmark building and the evolution of the museum from its establishment by the Hewitt Sisters in 1897 to its status post-renovation in 2014 as the nation’s design authority.

Ah-Ha to Zig-Zag: 31 Objects from Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum (published by Cooper Hewitt; Distributed by Skira/Rizzoli) by Maira Kalman is an unconventional alphabet book for children of all ages that brings a number of collection objects to colorful life, including a 13th-century silk thinking cap and Gerrit Rietveld’s Zig-Zag chair, accompanied by Kalman’s whimsical hand-lettered text.

My Favorite Things (published by HarperCollins) features more than 50 original paintings by Maira Kalman of objects from both the Cooper Hewitt and her personal collections. A pictorial index provides photographs of the actual objects and a short description.

SPONSORS

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ABOUT COOPER HEWITT, SMITHSONIAN DESIGN MUSEUM

Founded in 1897, Cooper Hewitt is the only museum in the nation devoted exclusively to historic and contemporary design. The museum educates, inspires and empowers people through design, presenting compelling educational programs, exhibitions and publications. International in scope and possessing one of the most diverse and comprehensive collections of design works in existence, the museum’s rich holdings range from Egypt’s Late Period/New Kingdom (1100 B.C.) to the present day and total more than 210,000 objects.

Cooper Hewitt is located at 2 East 91st Street at Fifth Avenue in New York City. Hours are Sunday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. The café and garden open prior to the museum – Sunday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday, 7:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. The museum is closed on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year’s Day. Public transit routes include the Lexington Avenue 4, 5 and 6 subways (86th or 96th Street

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stations) and the Fifth and Madison Avenue buses. Adult admission, \$18; seniors, \$12; students, \$9. Cooper Hewitt members and children younger than age 18 are admitted free. Pay What You Wish, every Saturday, 6 to 9 p.m. The museum is fully accessible.

For further information, please call (212) 849-8400, visit Cooper Hewitt's website at www.cooperhewitt.org and follow the museum on www.twitter.com/cooperhewitt, www.facebook.com/cooperhewitt and www.instagram.com/cooperhewitt.

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